

**REPLACEMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT**

Please replace the abstract with the following replacement abstract:

An EUV lithography system includes a mask chamber having one or more vacuum valves for isolating the mask chamber from the rest of the lithography system, a gas supply line adapted to provide an inert gas to the mask chamber to dechuck the reticle, and a vacuum pump adapted to re-evacuate the mask chamber after the reticle has been released. The one or more vacuum valves are closed to isolate the mask chamber from the rest of the EUV lithography system before venting the mask chamber with an inert gas, such as nitrogen, to release the reticle from the chuck.